

Wycombe Wanderers 1, Croydon 1

WYCOMBE Wanderers won't be sorry to see the end of the current season, after the events of the last week in which they have taken only two out of nine League points, been knocked out of the League Cup and seen their club captain Keith Mead suffer an injury that will put him out for the rest of the term, writes MICHAEL KNOX.

The latest disappointing Isthmian League result came at Loakes Park on Saturday, when Blues surrendered a 1-0 lead to drop two points in a 1-1 draw with Croydon. With Dagenham winning again, it seems that Wycombe must now settle for third place, at best.

To add to their misfortunes they collected only their second penalty point when acting captain Alan Phillips was cautioned in the second half.

This came after Phillips had been penalised for an off-the-ball incident. He then exchanged words with referee Mr Hedges, who promptly booked him, much to the dismay of Wycombe officials. This all costs money in the League's Sportsmanship Pool. The only other player to have been booked is Paul Birdseye.

After their recent performances, only a small crowd attended the game and the side's performance seems unlikely to halt the trend. The most damning criticism I can make is that it was dull.

Gone are those dazzling runs down the wings and gone are those quick and slick passing movements that made them the most attractive non-league side in the country.

KICK AND RUSH

This has been replaced by what I must term 'kick and rush'. The long ball is kicked down the middle in the hope that something might happen. If it

were not for their strong defence they would be an average middle of the table side.

Their form of late has, of course, been conditioned by a sickening run of injuries and unavailability but it is still sad to see a player of the calibre of Mickey Hollifield hanging back in mid-field instead of getting behind the defence and sending over dangerous crosses.

On one of the rare times Wycombe reached the bye-line, they scored in the 54th minute after an uneventful first half in which Blues had most of the play but created few clear cut openings. Alan Phillips saw one header tipped over the bar and Hollifield fired over when clear.

The goal came when Graham Mackenzie got round behind the Croydon defence. After missing one opportunity to cross the ball, he was given a second chance and the unmarked Dylan Evans headed home from a yard for his second goal in three games.

For a few moments after this goal, Blues played with greater conviction but following two quick corners in succession Croydon equalised.

The key man in the move leading up to the goal was Kelvin Rootes who twice forced John Maskell into making fine saves in the first half. This time he attacked down the left and worked a slick one-two with Charlie Pooley.

On receiving the ball back he advanced into the penalty area

and aimed a shot to the far post. But before it could get there, Alan Prime came storming in to scramble the ball over the line.

Immediately Mackenzie left the field with a slight knock, to be replaced by Howard Kennedy — just back from a school trip to Minehead.

But the only remaining action came from the fingers of Mr Hedges, which wrote the name of Alan Phillips into his notebook.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell, P. Birdseye, R. Davies, R. Strong, A. Phillips, J. Priestley, G. Mackenzie (sub H. Kennedy 76 mins), M. Hollifield, D. Harris, D. Evans, A. Horseman.

Croydon: F. Wheatland, P. Smith, K. Grosse, K. Rootes, R. Shinnars, R. Gonzales, A. Prime, A. Jackson, C. Pooley, A. Ward, C. Hall, Sub A. Welsh (not used).

Referee: D. Hedges (Oxford).

Half-time 0-0. Scorers: Wycombe — Evans (54 mins); Croydon — Prime (75).

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Enfield	39	32	5	2	89	25	101
Dagenham	40	23	7	10	76	52	76
Wycombe	39	21	7	11	62	38	70
Hitchin	39	19	9	11	67	51	66
Tooting	38	19	8	11	57	45	65
Croydon	41	17	10	14	60	52	61
Sutton	37	17	10	10	59	51	61
Barking	41	17	7	17	74	63	58
Hayes	41	15	11	15	46	52	56
Walthamstow	36	15	10	11	58	53	55
Leatherhead	33	15	8	10	51	36	53
Carshalton	40	14	11	15	59	61	53
Hendon	39	15	6	18	53	51	51
Boreham W	40	14	8	18	46	64	50
Woking	39	13	10	16	57	58	49
Staines	41	12	13	16	46	58	49
Slough	39	13	7	19	46	63	46
Tilbury	40	11	11	18	54	64	44
Kingstonian	42	8	13	21	43	65	37
Leytonstone	42	7	15	20	44	71	36
Southall	40	5	14	21	42	74	29
Stortford	40	7	8	25	34	76	29

WYCOMBE Wanderers start a hectic run-in of a possible nine games in 11 days by entertaining Walthamstow Avenue in a Rothmans Isthmian League Premier Division match at Loakes Park tonight (Tuesday).

This unprecedented backlog of fixtures, to be played before Cup Final day, May 6, has been caused by numerous postponements earlier in the season. In addition Blues have arranged two friendlies.

The Walthamstow game will provide a stiff test for struggling Wycombe, as their opponents are on a crest of a wave after beating Leatherhead recently to

win the prestigious London Senior Cup.

They keep virtually the same side that overturned Wanderers 1-0 less than three weeks ago. The scorer on that occasion was defender Derek Wells with a copybook header while strikers Vinnie Cotter and Alan Hunter also proved dangerous.

Ray Jarman has recovered from injury and returns to mid-field in a side which should read: B. Wilson; J. Webberley, R. Bradford, J. Worrall, D. Wells, R. Jarman; B. Walder, R. Sedgewick, V. Cotter, A. Hunter, S. Scudder. Sub.: M. Titchell.

The only other title Wycombe can win this season is the Shaw and Kilburn Floodlit League.

With four games to play they stand level on points with Banbury at the top. Those two teams meet each other for the first time at Loakes Park on Thursday night. The return match at Banbury has been scheduled for Tuesday, May 2.

Wycombe's other two matches in the league are home encounters with Witney and Aylesbury. The Witney match is tomorrow (Wednesday) night at Loakes Park, while the Aylesbury game is likely to take place next Wednesday.

On Friday, the eve of the F.A. Trophy final, Wycombe entertain former winners Scarborough in what could be an attractive match, while the other scheduled friendly is at home to

Football League Division Two strugglers Millwall on Thursday, May 4.

That leaves just two more Isthmian League games to be fitted in. These are away to Barking on Monday, May 1 and home to Sutton on May 5.

This incredibly busy finish to the season is bound to take its toll of injuries, and with skipper Keith Mead likely to be out for the rest of the season, manager John Reardon may have problems fielding 11 fit men.

It seems that Wycombe can say goodbye to the Isthmian runners-up spot and unless they improve they might even finish out of the top three. A good result against Walthamstow would help the cause.

SHAW & KILBURN FLOODLIT LEAGUE (up to April 20)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wycombe	8	7	0	1	20	6	21
Banbury	8	7	0	1	15	8	21
Chesham	9	3	4	2	20	11	13
Oxford City	11	4	1	6	27	19	13
Aylesbury	9	3	2	4	18	17	11
Milton Keynes	12	2	4	8	12	20	10
Witney Town	9	1	1	7	6	37	4